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What's in a Name: Exposing Gender Bias in Student Ratings of Teaching

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Study Design

- Students were randomly assigned to one of four work groups, which were divided between two instructors, one male and one female.
 - Unbeknownst to the students, each instructor interacted with one group under their own identity and a second under their fellow instructor's identity (see table below).
- We created a survey asking students to rate their instructors on 12 measures.

| Discussion Group | Instructor's Perceived Gender | Instructor's Actual Gender |
|------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Group A | Female | Female |
| Group B | Female | Male |
| Group C | Male | Female |
| Group D | Male | Male |

Results

Figure 1- Comparison of the aggregate index of student ratings across perceived instructor gender (left two columns) and actual instructor gender. The difference on the left is significant to the 0.1 level.

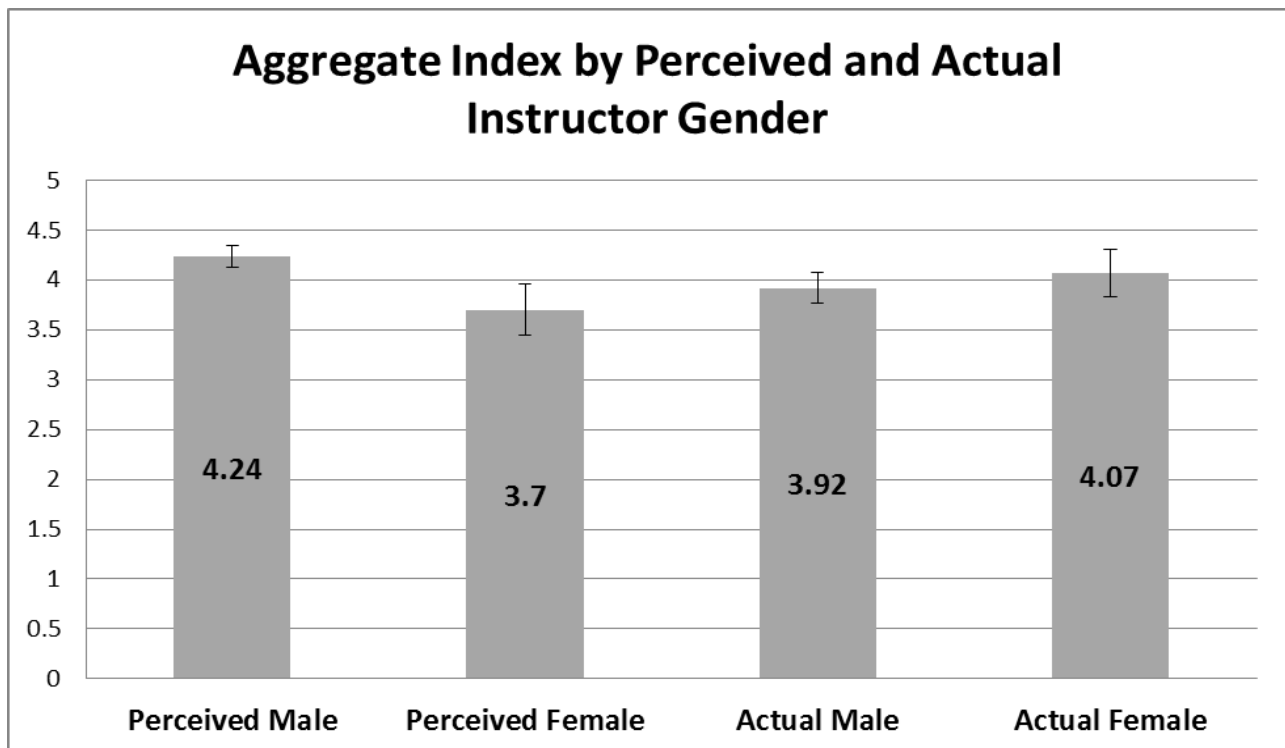


Table 1- Comparison of means of student ratings of teaching across the actual gender of the assistant instructor and the perceived gender of the assistant instructor.

Note: Each cell contains the mean student response for the question with the standard deviations in parentheses. The cells in the Difference columns contain the difference between the means with the *r*-squared in italics and parentheses. Welch's *t*-tests were used to establish the significance of the observed differences.

† p <= 0.10. * p <= 0.05.

- There was no significant difference in the ratings of the actual male and actual female instructor.

- There was, however, a statistically significant difference in the ratings of the perceived male and perceived female instructor, with the perceived male receiving an average of 3/4 of a point higher than the perceived female.
 - The perceived male received higher ratings on all 12 metrics, six of which were significant differences.
 - For example, the same turnaround time for grades was rated as a 4.35/5 for the perceived male instructor, and a 3.55/5 for the perceived female.